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ON THE COVER: Tanya Austin poses with tree stump accent tables she created to display at the Ames Golf and Country Club. Austin currently has 20 accent tables in her inventory, with her material coming from old trees the country club had to cut down. Photo by Nirmalendu Majumdar/Ames Tribune

EDITOR'S NOTE

When I think of what I am thankful for, the list looks about the same every year. My family and friends. A roof over my head, a means to afford that roof. A washer and dryer, food in my belly. This year I can add a few more things to the list:

■ I am thankful for blossoming hobbies: knitting, quilting and maybe cross stitching. Knitting and quilting are interests that I picked up from watching both my grandmas and I am grateful these interests come naturally to me.

■ I am thankful for my education. I haven't been out of school for too long, but everyday I am reminded that my education is useful and I worked hard for it.

■ Then there is my puppy. He is growing like a weed — he can be a bit destructive at times — but I wouldn't trade him for anything. He is always happy to see me when I come home and is constantly ready to play or go for a ride. And always up for a good cuddle!

My favorite parts of Thanksgiving are the day, the meal and the people. My aunt and uncle have a larger dining table than my parents or Grandma so we gather at their house. My aunt has a thing for Feistaware place settings. She has an upward of 30 plates and I don't think she repeats colors either. Thirty plates can be quite helpful for our get together. My "family" is about normal size, just 13 of us, but then you add in the best part: all the "extras." The extras are some of the men that work for my dad and family friends. My dad owns a flooring installation business and he hires South Dakota State University football players almost every summer. Some stay on through the school year and every once in awhile, if they live a ways away or the weather gets bad they join the family for a day. Others are those who travel home for Christmas but stay in town for Thanksgiving.

We have had repeat extras that had so much fun the year before that they ask if it would be OK to tag along again. With my family, that is the wrong question to ask. The right question is 'What time are you serving the meal?' I honestly don't think my family would enjoy Thanksgiving in the same way if we didn't have the tag-alongs and the extras. There have been times where we have bullied family friends, in jest, to get them to join us for the afternoon. Those guests are what make the Benz-McCracken-Niemeyer Thanksgiving what it is. (And we can't forget Grandma's cranberry orange salad. That happened ... once.)

Ames group sews kits for women across the globe

BY SARINA RHINEHART
Staff Writer
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Since April, a group of Ames women have been utilizing their time and sewing skills to enable young women in underdeveloped countries to have uninterrupted school and work days.

The group of 16 women gather once a month at St. Cecilia Catholic Church where they cut, sew and assemble reusable feminine hygiene kits to be shipped across the globe as part of the nonprofit Days for Girls.

Carol Helland and Mary Ross are co-leaders of the Ames Group. Helland said she used to sew dresses for African girls, but the groups traveling to Africa said there were an overabundance of dresses, but there was a need for another sewing project — washable, reusable feminine pads.

"Never did it occur to me this would be a problem," Helland said.

Helland said girls in underdeveloped countries use anything they can find when on their periods including leaves, newspaper, corn husks or tree bark.

"They use totally unsuitable products," Helland said. "Having your period is bad enough."

"It was something most hadn't even thought about," Ross said.

Because of the lack of sanitary supplies, Helland said these girls miss days of school and work, leaving them with less income to support their families.



Doreen Berg and Cynthia Shriver assemble parts of the feminine hygiene kits the Ames Days for Girls group create. Photo by Sarina Rhinehart/Ames Tribune

The Ames group is one of 10 groups across Iowa that assembles these kits which last 2 to 3 years and include eight sewn liners, two moisture barrier shields, a bar of soap, a washcloth and Ziploc bags, all of which is put into a hand sewn drawstring bag.

Helland said to cut, sew and complete the hand work, it takes

approximately an hour and a half to create one kit.

Helland said these kits offer girls a more dignified and safe feminine hygiene solution.

The kits made in Ames are given to Blessman Ministries in Urbandale, who sends groups periodically over to South Africa to distribute resources to families. Helland said she also recently spoke with a group of women in Colo interested in starting a group to sew and assemble these kits.

Ross said the Ames group is open to anyone wanting to volunteer their time for the cause. The group also accepts donations for any of the kits materials, including 100 percent cotton and flannel which are used to make the reusable pads.

If interested in joining the group, they meet at St. Cecilia at 7 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month.

Carol Helland and Virginia Ullrick work to sew reusable feminine hygiene products to be sent to young women overseas. Photo by Sarina Rhinehart/Ames Tribune



IT'S ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

BY KAREN SCHWALLER
Contributing Writer

Thankfulness takes many forms, and for the farm wife, there are many more layers to the word 'thankfulness,' possibly just because her home is out in the middle of farming country.

Case in point: This past summer I had called an appliance repairman to look at our refrigerator. In the meantime, I needed to leave, so I told him where the refrigerator was, and asked him to call me with his diagnosis.

He called later, saying there was a dog in the house that would not let him in, so he left.

At first I thought, "Bad dog!....er, wait....good dog!" I couldn't decide if I was more annoyed with the fact that he kept our refrigerator from being fixed, or happy about the fact that he protected our home. In the end, I was thankful for a territorial dog — a rural protective force on four legs. And we don't even have to share our tax dollars with him.

There are lots of things farm wives deal with — a mud room that is spotted with barnyard-generated clumps that are not actually 'mud'; clothes dryers that double as corn dryers — and dry almost as much corn; hand towels that look like they belong at the tire repair shop, supper in the field in the spring and fall — and summer suppers at 10 p.m.; mending pliers pockets on blue jeans and insulated coveralls, blow dryers that show up missing because they are out in the lambing barn — used to warm up babies that need help, and mid-night trips out to the barn in mid-February to check on impending animal mothers.

The farm wife is thankful for scented candles that make her home smell like she doesn't live on a farm, and for scents that she hopes will never be manufactured — such as "Hog Chore Clothing" and "Dog

and Skunk Standoff."

Her autumn days are full, with her family calling on her help often when they are so busy. If she's not in the tractor or working a full-time job in town, she's the parts runner, supper hauler, people and equipment mover, bookkeeper, bill payer, garden produce preserver, lawn maintenance person, fill-in person when someone is gone, part-time land tiller and hay raker, and sounding board for when equipment breaks down and people disagree on protocol.

She's thankful there is no time to watch television, because her real life is far more interesting than anything networks can offer her. She has a lot to do, but she knows there are many who long for things to fill their days.

While the harvest is more bountiful some years than others, she is always grateful for it. It's that bounty that gives her the life she lives so willingly. It brings her both joy and tears, but it's still a life that offers her what — and whom — no other life can. And so she stays.

And as she contemplates the harvest in the bins and out in the barns, she thinks about all of the other bounties she reaps, perhaps undeservingly, throughout the year — family, friends, food, a place to call home, safe harvest seasons, the health of her family, people to help her and her family through tough times; and this life that she shakes her head at some days... but would still never trade.

And let's not forget to be thankful for cocoa bean farmers. St. Paul was on the right track when he said, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)

From my perspective, I can do all of my things through chocolate, which also gives me strength. Me, cocoa farmers and St. Paul — we've got this farm life covered.

And for that, I am truly thankful.



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Tanya Austin poses in front of a tree stump accent table she created to display at the Ames Golf and Country Club. Austin currently has 20 accent tables in her inventory, with her material coming from old trees the country club had to cut down. Photo by Nirmalendu Majumdar/Ames Tribune

Local woman creates accent tables out of area tree stumps

By Julie Ferrell

Staff Writer

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What started as a volunteer project for the Ames Golf and Country Club has turned into a passion for one local woman.

Tanya Austin, of Ames, has worked in both a creative and academic background over the years but recently decided she wanted to focus her efforts on a new project: design. After owning a membership to the local country club for years, Austin decided to she wanted to help redesign it.

"This is the type of club where you take personal ownership of it. When things need done, you step up and do it. So it was a volunteer effort that I made for the club," she said. "I'd been following trends on accent tables, and the use of tree stumps and that natural design. (The club) had trees that had naturally died and had to be taken down, and they were using it as firewood. So I went down there and said we're using these as accent tables for the front room."

The project, which she began earlier this summer, was a new experience for Austin, who has a background in both graphic communications and family and consumer sciences, education and studies. She had worked at Iowa State University as an academic advisor and instructor, and worked with several entrepreneurship grants.

"So I kind of always have the little bug of creating something," she said. "But I found myself wanting to come back to the creative side."

Now, as a designer, Austin is constantly on the look-out for old materials she can repurpose,



Tanya Austin poses with a few of her tree stump accent tables she created to display at the Ames Golf and Country Club. Photo by Nirmalendu Majumdar/Ames Tribune

and she has also created coasters and trash cans made out of wood pallets to be used at the country club. She does not use a specific tree wood, but instead "works with whatever has been naturally damaged," and often tries to find pieces with holes in the wood or something unique to each creation.

"It's not the product of 'That's the perfect tree, let's cut it down.' We're working with what we have," she said.

Each table takes roughly 20 hours of work, not including Austin's "drying-out" time, which she said could vary from tree to tree. She finds a portion of the stump with "unique character," and first de-barks the piece. Austin then uses a planer to get a clean surface.

"That's especially for some that have been sitting out for a year in snow or water," she said. "So I really get it to its raw state as much as possible."

Once the stump is stripped down, Austin starts her sanding process, and some are then stained or white-washed. Austin

said all her tables are treated with an indoor polyurethane, but custom orders could be given an outdoor coating to protect it from moisture like rain or snow.

While she has always had a drive to create, Austin said the new project was no easy task. Almost every step of the way, she had to learn something new and develop a method that worked best for her.

"People would laugh at me working electric, with planers and chainsaws," she said. "So it's helped me grow personally, and I had to learn almost everything except sanding. It was all trial and error."

But the learning process also helped give individuality to each piece, she added.

For instance, as she was learning how to stain, each table has a different look to it based on how comfortable she was with the process at the time.

"The first few I wasn't happy with, but you do it and you move on and either you've got your formula down or you know exactly what not to do," she said.

"You just keep going and—at least how I learn—I'll start, hate it, try something else. So I couldn't replicate any if I tried, each one is so individual."

Her work, so far, has been sold to a few local residents, but Austin said she is interested in making custom orders. She currently has 20 tables in her inventory, with each one weighing between 45 and 85 pounds, depending on how dry the wood is.

"There are ones in my garage that are beasts, which is why they're still in my garage," she said. "But those are on casters, so they're easily manipulated within the home environment."

While the lighter tables are currently placed on self-leveling pegs, Austin said she would eventually like to try new "more industrial designs" using hairpin legs. But for now, Austin wants to start with a small collection.

"These aren't something you can put in a closet until they sell," she said. "So I don't want to create 50 different kinds and just have them sit. So I thought 20 would be a great number to start, and let's just see how that goes."

Her tables are currently selling for \$239 each, and Austin can be contacted at 515-231-1091.

Austin has considered opening an online shop in the future but for now, she hopes to see her work go home with local residents who may have a connection to the history behind her tables.

"Accent tree stump tables are a trend now, so I might expand to a larger market later," she said. "But my intent when I made my inventory was for club members who may want some history of the club."

Is whole milk healthy? Don't raise that glass yet

BY ROSALIND BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

Just in time for the national caloric binge that is the winter holiday season, the federal government is expected to release the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the every-five-years report that tells us what we should eat.

Fresh vegetables and fruits will certainly be on the list. But after years of exile, full-fat whole milk and other whole-milk dairy

products may make a return.

A growing body of research suggests that saturated fat in dairy, specifically in milk, may not be as harmful to overall health as previously thought, according to an article on the research by The Washington Post. Citing studies of thousands of people over 10 years, the Post said those studies showed people who drank more milk fat had lower rates of heart disease.

The government has been warning Americans off of

saturated fat since the 1980s, and the new guidelines will not declare saturated fats to be suddenly risk-free. Nevertheless, the science surrounding milk fat in particular is nuanced and complex.

The current draft of the Dietary Guidelines do not embrace full-fat dairy, not even a little bit.

"The overall body of evidence examined by the 2015 (Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee) identifies that a healthy dietary

pattern is higher in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, seafood, legumes, and nuts; moderate in alcohol (among adults); lower in red and processed meats and low in sugar-sweetened foods and drinks and refined grains," according to a report released by the committee in February.

So how did we get from there to here? To a point where after decades of shunning it, we might be able to pour whole milk on our cereal again without guilt?

A partial answer to those questions is that not all saturated fat is created equal, said Desiree Wanders, an assistant professor of nutrition and dietary researcher at Georgia State University. Milk contains nutrients that many other high saturated fats don't, such as phosphorus, calcium and potassium, which have been shown to help combat high-blood pressure, Wanders said. In addition, milk fat has a form of fatty acids that could be "cardio-protective."

"You can't ignore the research," Wanders said. "Most of the research coming out in the last 20 years says high saturated fat doesn't necessarily promote heart disease. Dairy appears to have enough benefits to outweigh the negative effects of saturated fat. It's not the saturated fat but the food it's found in. Dairy is protective. Processed meat is not."

Jamie Cooper, associate professor of food and nutrition at the University of Georgia, has examined the role of dietary fat and its effect on metabolism, inflammation and how full a person feels after eating certain foods. She agrees that there are huge differences in saturated fats, but she cautions people against interpreting the research to mean it's OK to introduce a little more of it into the daily diet.

"Maybe saturated fats aren't quite as bad as they were made out to be, but there are still a lot of detrimental effects of saturated fats," Cooper said. "Dairy and dairy products have other beneficial nutrients in them. So if you're going to have saturated fat, you might as well get them from dairy rather than deep-fried foods."

But as an example of how

divided the medical community can be when looking at the same studies and the same findings, take Dr. Jennifer Rooke, an assistant professor of community health and preventive medicine at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Rooke said she works with patients to remove all saturated fats from their diets, especially those from dairy products. She sees the cholesterol in saturated fats as the real culprit in heart disease.

"Saturated fat by itself does not cause heart problems, but the issue is that it's impossible to separate it from cholesterol in food," Rooke said.

As a result, Rooke advises her patients to avoid milk and milk products all together and to adopt a mostly plant-based diet. She avoids the terms vegetarian or vegan because they represent ideologies, she said, not necessarily good nutrition. The key is replacing the saturated fats with unsaturated fats found in foods like avocados, walnuts and almonds.

Ironically, even though Wanders and Rooke disagree on the role of dairy fat in the diet, they both agree on this: neither thinks people need any kind of milk past adolescence. But adults should continue to get calcium from food sources such as leafy, dark green vegetables and fish such as sardines, including the bones.

When it comes to nutrition guidelines, the public tends to appreciate clear and definitive statements, with little room for ambiguity.

"The public doesn't like mixed messages and the guidelines lose credibility and people stop trying to follow them," said Sandra Dunbar, a cardiovascular researcher at

Emory University School of Nursing.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell, whose departments jointly issue the Dietary Guidelines, ran into that sentiment during House Agriculture Committee hearings last week.

"We've had these guidelines that have pushed people away from eggs and butter and milk, and then they come back and say, 'Well, we were wrong,'" said Rep. Collin Peterson, D-Minn.

"From my constituents, most of them don't believe this stuff anymore. You have lost your credibility with a lot of people and they are just flat out ignoring this stuff."

Vilsack sought a middle ground.

"All of this is evolving," he said. "You're not going to ever have something that is just going to be fact about this, because science evolves, we learn more, we understand more, and I would hope that we would be flexible enough to appreciate that."

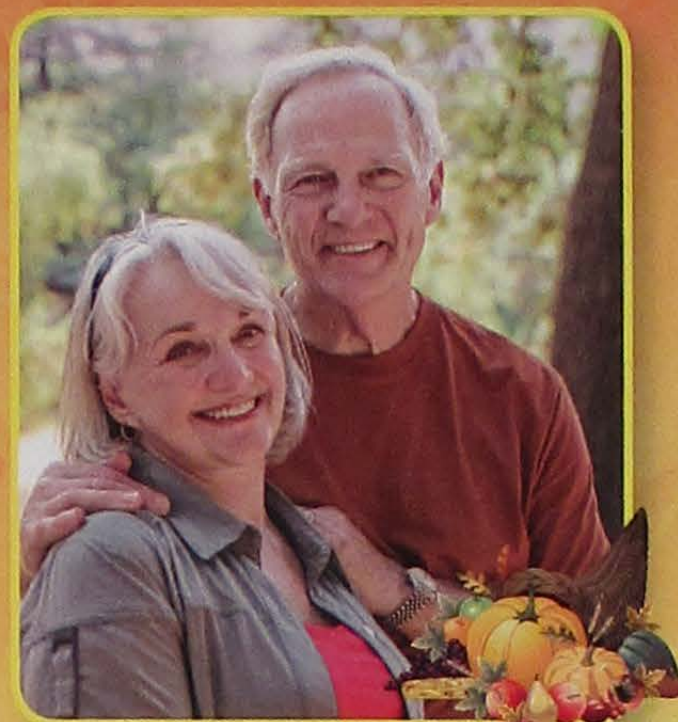
Dunbar, the Emory researcher, says the Dietary Guidelines, no matter how definitive, can only take you so far.

"Diet is only one part of what influences cardiovascular diseases," she said. "Not smoking, getting exercise, maintaining a healthy weight, all of those are key in determining whether saturated fat will promote heart disease. The question isn't should you have whole milk or not."

Still confused? Dunbar offers a fairly easy solution.

"When you get conflicting information, ask your health provider, 'What is right for me based on my health history?'" she said.

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The Wandling family: back row, Luke and Cory; next row from left, Aaron, Rhonda Jorie and Matt; next row down from left, reclining back is James, Emily, Cherie (hair in a bun) Jaime; and front row from left Stephanie, Tina, Caitlin (holding a young Ki) and Michael. Contributed photo



The grandkids bottom row from left Ella, Paisley, Reid and Fenton. Top row from left, Ki, Troy and Taliya. Contributed photo

Wandling Thanksgiving

Family, friends, neighbors and good food

BY TODD BURRAS
Contributing Writer

By many accounts, the Thanksgiving Day gathering at Rhonda and Cory Wandling's house isn't any different than it is at most any other home in Ames, central-Iowa or the U.S., for that matter. At their house on Prairie View East Drive in north Ames, one can expect to experience the same smorgasbord of Thanksgiving holiday traditions as one would anywhere else. Think food, family and football.

Step into the spacious open kitchen and family room on Thanksgiving Day, however, and many of the similarities vanish as quickly as a leftover turkey drumstick on Black Friday. Situated around the dining table and accompanying tables and chairs you're likely to see at least a majority of Rhonda and Cory's ever-growing family.

Besides Rhonda and Cory, the Wandling family includes their two biological sons — Matt, 33, and Mike, 32; five adopted daughters — Cherie, 26, Stephanie, 25, Emily, 23, Jorie, 23, and Tina, 18; three adopted sons — James, 23, Luke, 22, and Aaron, 15; as well as daughters-in-law Jaime and Caitlin and grandchildren Troy, Reid, Ki, Ella, Fenton, Paisley and Taliya. Then there are the numerous friends and neighbors who pack themselves in next to the family.

"A 'typical' number who show up is hard because it changes from year to year," Rhonda said, "but it's usually around 30."

And the most they've hosted?

"Around 45 I think," she said.

The Wandling's dining table seats 12 comfortably "but we usually squeeze a couple more in," Rhonda said. "My eating area is one big room with the family room and kitchen so we eat all over. It works well because we can see and hear everyone. I just put all the food on the kitchen bar and we go at it."

Rhonda, who grew up in Ames, and Cory, who was born in California but moved to Iowa when he was 2, said Thanksgiving has always been a time of welcoming family members and others into their home.

"When my brothers and I started having kids, Rhonda and I would go to my parents' house for Thanksgiving since we lived in Minneapolis back then," Cory said. "My in-laws' house was too small to have everyone over so we would have them come over to my parents' house. After my mom passed away we started having it at our house, and my brother would have it at his house for his family. My dad would kind of go back and forth between the houses. Now my dad lives

in Florida during the winter and so now it's our family with lots of extras."

The "extras" are part of an open-door policy the Wandlings have adopted when it comes to opening up their home to anyone who needs a place to go on Thanksgiving.

"We have an extra place mentality that just means that there is always room for one more person," Rhonda said. "If we run out of some foods there is always something else around. No one will leave hungry. People get hung up on the food too much sometimes. Peanut butter sandwiches taste pretty good when it's eaten with people who care about you."

With so many people to feed and their different taste palettes, though, Rhonda does try her best to make special food that everyone enjoys along with a few sides that are family favorites, such as cheesy potatoes — Aaron's favorite — raspberry muffins, pumpkin cake with cream cheese frosting, pineapple poupon sauce for the ham, deviled eggs and hot apple cider with added spices.

"We also serve pretty much the traditional fare — stuffing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, salad, rolls etc.," she said. "I used to make a large turkey but a lot of the kids told me they prefer ham so now I make a small turkey and a ham. I used to do a lot of the food, but now I delegate a bit more, and my mom (Helen Phillips) always supplies the pies."

Besides the food, the Wandlings have numerous other traditions that surround the Thanksgiving celebration, including having supper and watching the movie "Planes, Trains and Automobiles" at Matt and Jaime's on Wednesday night, as well as "a lot of singing while we cook, watching football, sharing what we're thankful for from the past year, looking at the ads for Black Friday and answering question cards that we keep at the table," Rhonda said.

The question cards are something the Wandlings started years ago.

"They're a small box with cards that have all kinds of questions like 'If you could change your name what would it be?' to 'If you could meet anyone alive or dead who would it be?'" Rhonda said. "The little grandkids even like to 'read' the cards. They will pull a card and make up a question. Usually it's 'What's your favorite color?' They have come in very handy for conversation starters or getting to know a new friend."

"Thanksgiving has changed over the years. We used to go to Cory's parents, but then the torch got passed. I didn't grow up having extras at the table. Now it feels very odd if it's just our family."

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Games offer a foundation to build creativity

BY ARMIN BROTT AND SAMANTHA FEUSS Tribune | News Service

Play is supposed to be fun, right? But these days, there are a lot of toys and games that take away some (or most) of the fun by having so many elaborate rules that any hope of creativity is stifled. At the same time, having no rules at all can be so overwhelming that it's impossible to start. The best games — the ones you want to play over and over — include some basic rules but also give the players plenty of space to improvise.

How to Tell a Story (book by Daniel Nayeri)

The best stories are the ones that have a basic structure and some familiar elements, such as action, conflict and the characters' motivation. But putting those elements together isn't always easy. *How to Tell a Story* is like a creative writing workshop in a box. The 140-plus-page book includes some excellent insights into how to write (or just tell) a story. But the best part is the 20 story blocks, which have unique illustrations on each side. They fall into six color-coded categories: red (people or animals), blue (things), orange (places), yellow (descriptions or emotions), green (actions), and purple (relationships). The idea is to roll the blocks like dice and use what's on each face to create your stories. A wonderful way to stimulate creativity while learning



Learn about a subject (animals or science) through hands-on activities, games and art. Photo by TNS

how to be a better storyteller. Ages 3 and up.


more. Ages 4 and up. wonderforge.com

Disney Magicademy (Wonderforge)

Another clever way to make learning fun. Magicademy Animals takes kids on a tour of the animal kingdom, learning about what each species eats, where they live, how they protect themselves, and what we as humans can do to protect them and their environment. Kids and parents will love the huge variety of clever-yet-educational activities and games, such as word scrambles, crossword puzzles, animal bingo, matching games, drawing challenges, and vocabulary (did you know that a group of mice is called a "mischief"?). Magicademy Science brings a similar approach to the world of science. Guided by the beloved characters from the movie *Frozen*, kids will learn about weather, physics, color, light, our five senses and more. Both kits come with a 60-page activity book, colored pencils, stickers, a storage pouch, and

Dohdles (Kosmos)

Like most board games, the goal of Dohdles is for players to be the first to move their pawn from a starting space to an ending space. And as with many board games, players can move their own pawn forward or do something to keep their opponents from advancing. Unlike with most other board games, though, players don't have to roll dice or pick cards or answer questions to move. Instead, they use modeling dough to create a small sculpture that other players will have to identify (the word dohdle, by the way, combines the words dough and riddle). The trick is to make your dohdles hard — but not impossible — to guess. The sculptor (called Dohdle Master) can score points when opponents guess correctly. Comes with plenty of modeling dough that doesn't dry out, stain or smear. Takes about 40 minutes to play. For 3-6 players 10 and up. thame-sandkosmos.com



Butternuts are long keepers and easy to grow, with a rich, nutty flavor that's even better than pumpkin.
Photo by Jan Rigenbach

If it looks like a pumpkin and tastes like a pumpkin...

BY JAN RIGGENBACH
Contributing Writer

Pumpkin pie. Pumpkin bread. Pumpkin cookies. These goodies are musts for Thanksgiving and other autumn celebrations. But I have a secret I no longer confess to my dinner guests: My pumpkin dishes contain no pumpkin. They have instead butternut squash, which I find much easier to grow in the garden.

With a tan color and a shape something like a skinny bell, a butternut in the garden doesn't resemble a pumpkin. Its flesh, though, is bright orange, just like pumpkin. And its taste is similar to pumpkin only better, with a rich, nutty flavor.

Although many people don't know it, almost all canned "pumpkin" puree is actually squash. The USDA allows it, calling for the product to contain mature, sweet varieties of either pumpkin or squash. It's a problem only in the minds of people who think they love pumpkin but

hate squash. So I don't tell.

I used to grow pumpkins, but tired of fighting vine borers, a common problem in Midwest gardens. The adult moths lay their eggs on the lower stems of pumpkins and most other kinds of squash. When the eggs hatch, the larvae bore into the stems and begin feeding on the inside. They're hard to spot until the damage is done, and hard to treat. In July, just as the fruits are beginning to grow, the vines collapse and die. But not if it's butternut, which has solid stems the borers don't attack.

Butternuts are also notoriously long keepers, much better than any other squash or pumpkin I've grown. When the first frost threatens, I look for butternuts that are more of a rich tan than a light cream color. If their skin is hardly marked by the pressure of my thumbnail, they pass the maturity test and are cut from the vine with about an inch of stem left intact.

I keep the harvested butternuts at room temperature for about a week

to "cure," then tuck them away in a single layer on shelves in a cool basement closet. Most keep for many months, ready to use whenever I crave a little "pumpkin."

Sweet potatoes, another must for autumn meals, store even longer than butternuts. Many years, the last few still remain in storage when I harvest the next year's crop in the fall.

If you can fence off deer and rabbits, sweet potatoes are exceedingly easy to grow. I grow new starts each spring from a perfect root set aside in autumn and haven't bought starter plants for several decades.

Throughout the growing season, sweet potatoes need little attention. Just before—or immediately after—the first fall frost, I clip off the vines near the ground and dig up the bounty. Any sweet potatoes with imperfections are set aside for immediate use, but I wrap the perfect ones individually in newspaper and tuck them into a cardboard box. They keep very well in the same cool basement closet where I store butternuts.

The Holidays are just around the corner!

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WALK IN'S WELCOME



Giving thanks in an active lifestyle

BY KECIA PLACE-FENCL
Contributing Writer

On Aug. 2, 2015, I completed my third Ironman triathlon and was overwhelmed with gratitude when I crossed the finish line. Whether you are just getting started with a fitness routine, have been working out regularly for years, or are an elite athlete, there is always room for gratitude in an active lifestyle.

Give thanks to your body

I often put my body through a lot of challenging situations as I physically and mentally push my body to new limits.

It is important to remember to thank your body for all of the hard work that it does for you. You can thank your body by listening to its needs, nourishing it with healthy foods, properly hydrating and properly recovering.

Your body will tell you what it needs, so take the time to really listen and respond to those needs appropriately to keep it working for you instead of against you.

When leading a healthy lifestyle, it is critical to fuel your body with healthy foods. You don't put sand in the gas tank of your car and expect it to operate successfully, so focus on properly fueling and hydrating your engine to optimize performance.

Through exercise, your muscles get torn down microscopically; the body rebuilds itself stronger than it once was when you incorporate adequate recovery into your fitness routine. Give your body the thanks it deserves by providing it with all it needs to keep working hard for you.



*Love what
you do and
give thanks to
your body!*



My cup
runneth
over with
gratitude for
my village!

Give thanks to your village

There are many people who help me succeed along each and every fitness journey on which I embark. I thank every person who has helped me achieve my goals and you should too. These people may not only be your family and friends, but also workout partners, coaches, personal trainers, group fitness instructors, doctors, massage therapists, nutritionists, bike mechanics, shoe fit experts, neighbors — the choices are endless. Thank your village — without them, you might not have the successes you've experienced.

Give thanks to your equipment

Some fitness endeavors take minimal equipment, while others take lots of equipment to help you achieve your goals. Without your equipment, you might not be able to succeed, so be thankful for the equipment you have.

Investing in good quality equipment might make your journey much sweeter; take the time to keep your equipment clean and in good working order. Replace your exercise shoes when it's time, to ensure a solid base for your fitness.

Give thanks to the changing seasons

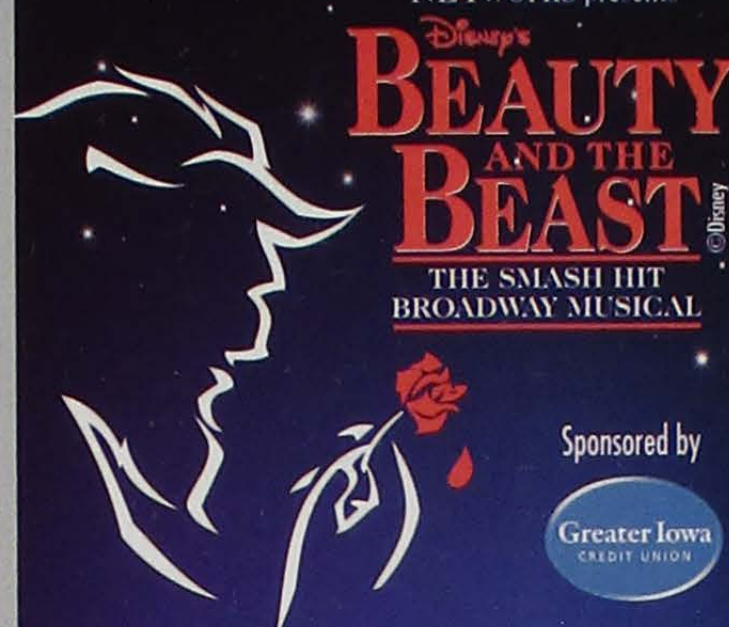
The warm summer days have long gone, and the days of fall are becoming more crisp. Don't let the cooler weather stop your drive to remain fit. While it may seem there are less options for exercise when the weather turns colder, that is simply not true.

Be thankful that you have variety in the changing seasons, which allows you to exercise in heat, cold, indoors and out. Variety in exercise can revitalize the mind and body.

No matter what fitness journey you are on, I challenge you to give thanks for the fitness you are able to do, the people who encourage your success and the wonderful life you are leading.

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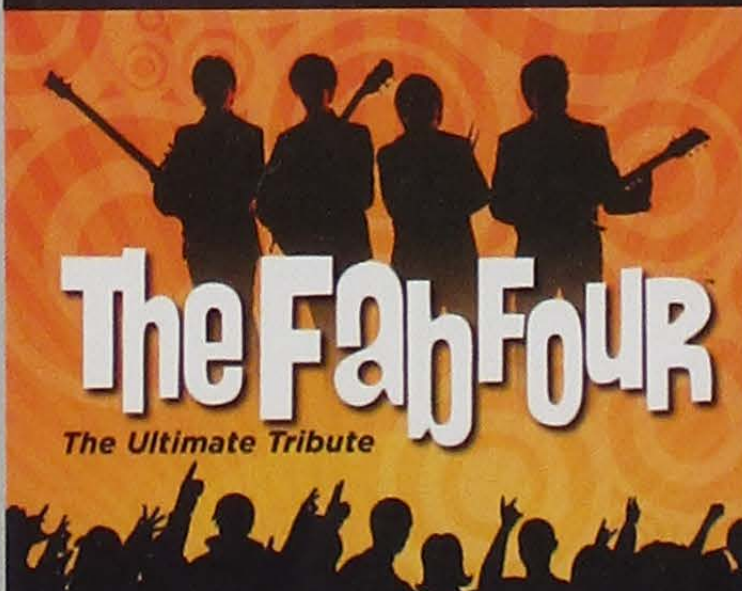
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Water in the Works

*"How could drops of water know themselves
to be a river? Yet, the river flows on."*

~Antoine de Saint-Exupery

BY JANE M. DEGENEFTE
Contributing Writer

It all takes time, but when we as individuals consider the outcome of worthwhile projects, our patience and resolve set into motion. And like the strength of a river, we flow on with purpose. The resulting good works of our patience and resolve become reality as we anticipate a project's end. Such can be the outcome of community development.

An example of such development could mean seeing potential in a vacant lot for transformation into a skate park, community garden, or rest stop. Having vision for the future of others as well as consideration for our surrounding environment moves us forward as caring individuals, just as a single drop of water collects to become a flowing river. Another example of this sort of vision could be seeing potential in a few hours spent volunteering at a food bank that will surely result in families being fed for at least one more week as details are worked out during a family crisis.

Possibilities are endless for potential, and opportunities of such vision await us when we consider the worthwhile outcome of changing our environment and community for the good and benefit of all.

The city of Ames has been hanging onto a vision for our Skunk River and adjacent waterways! Recently this vision has become near reality as each individual involved moves forward with a plan for transformation.

In 2009 the Ames Park and Recreation Department received grant money to begin a safety project to convert the low-head dam at North River Valley Park on the Skunk River into a functional, yet safe recreation feature. Now, in 2015 the Ames Park and Recreation department is going forward to complete this transformation.

Currently, the safety measures existing for the North River Valley Park include upstream signage, upstream exit, portage around the dam, and fencing near the parking area. The history of the dam shows the functional aspect of recharging the city water supply aquifer, yet in recent years with the view of this project's stakeholders in mind, the Skunk River has been considered as having great potential for recreational use. Skunk River paddlers, Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, Story County Conservation and Prairie Rivers of Iowa are like-minded organizations that have kept close to heart the desire to see modification along this river. Families of those who have lost loved ones due to the dam's hazardous recirculation effect, are also interested parties involved in seeing this dam converted into a useable, yet safe waterway.

Here is a comparison interview with Keith Abraham of Ames Park and Recreation, Christina Murphy, assistant director with water and pollution control, and Steve Lindaman, Charles City Park and Recreation director. Charles City has a beautiful recreational use of the Cedar River that flows directly through the little town.

Has the North River Valley project been inspired at all by Charles City?

Keith Abraham: Not really. Their's was with the intent of attracting white water. Our primary purpose is to mitigate the danger of the dam. The perk would be some recreational usage.

There have been many like-minded individuals who are interested in using the Skunk River (as well as other waterways of Iowa) and have shown support for this project in hopes that the river and tributaries will be kept clean. Who are these like-minded individuals?

Keith Abraham: The different groups who would benefit are the birdwatchers, hiking, fishing and paddling groups. We've asked them to give us some ideas as to what they would like to see. In conjunction with this, there is another committee that is looking at the Skunk River as being designated a water trail. They're looking at Highway 69 by Ada Hayden to River Valley as being the gateway of the water trail through Story County... It would be a highlight for anyone to do that portion of the river.

What is a water trail, exactly?

Keith Abraham: A water trail is very specific as to what standards go into it. The standards will help people to find paths and fishing points along the waterway. It would be a gateway for canoeing, and would involve four different levels of what it could be.

How has this project been paid for? And what are the motivations behind this project?

Christina Murphy: The primary focus is safety, however, there will be definite benefits for the community. City of Ames Water and Utility is matching funds from DNR, and Park and Rec is adding \$40,000.

Other funding has been made available through unidentified grants. We are actively looking for more funds.

An estimated \$225,000 is needed for labor and cost of material. The approval for this grant came from the DNR. \$75,000 was granted. The city of Ames water and utility fund is matching the grant money. Also, there are in-kind donations of \$40,000, with the hope that there will be other donations coming in to help cover the costs.

Keith Abraham: You can see that it's very steep along the river. What we want to do is to scale the bank of the water back and to make it more attractive and easier to get to the water. With this design, there will also be a way for fish to migrate upstream as well. Which right now they can't do.

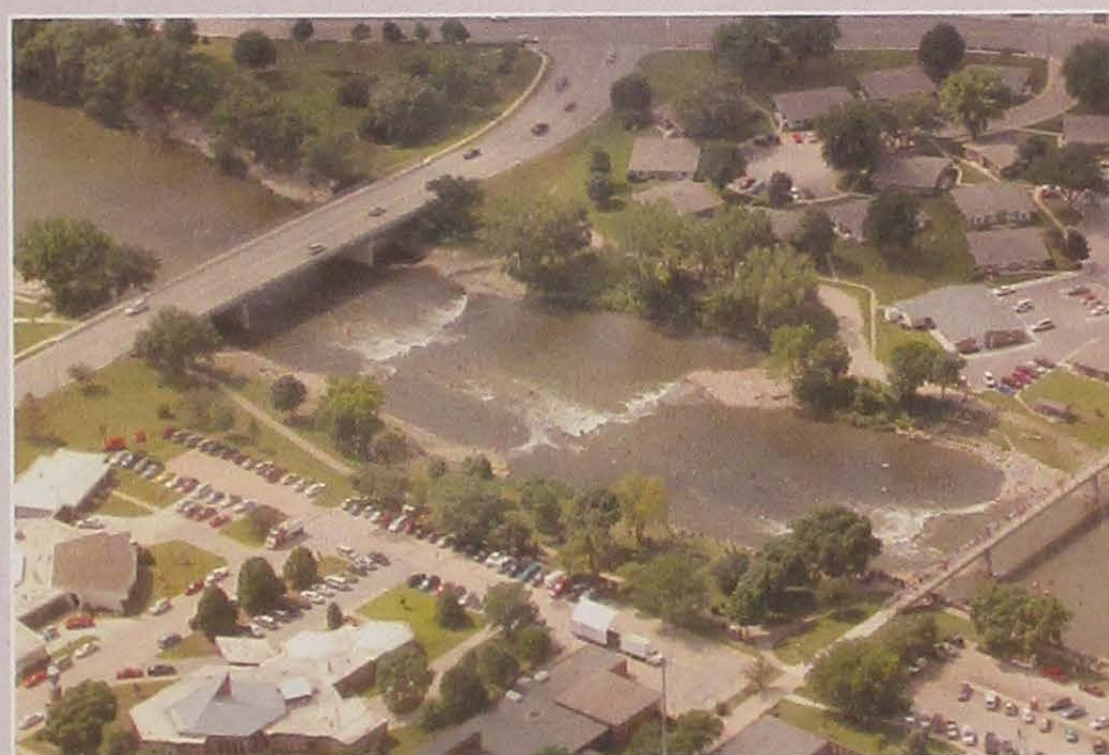
Is the Squaw and Skunk clean enough to have people enjoy mild whitewater experiences?

Keith Abraham: At any given time the river can change, but there should be minor repairs and make sure the vegetation stays in place. We do stream sampling of the water, testing the river and posting results. We regularly meet the standard to disinfect. We can't control what goes in. Streams are not in the best of health as what they could be. We are meeting standards, but we could be better.

How can we as a community help meet the standards of safe recreational use of the river and water-ways?

Keith Abraham: The city of Ames educates our community. We encourage people to stay off the river during high water. The active paddlers in Ames need to understand that there is a lot of private land along the river. When people are utilizing the river they need to respect private land owners property. We are educating the public with signage at canoe access points. Maintaining the river by leaving it better than what you've found it to be is a constant challenge. Don't throw your cans overboard. Slogans to help remind people "carry in carry out" will hopefully help to remind people to keep the river clean.

In actuality, a lot of storm water is going into our waterways. Heavy rains can bring things into the Skunk even from other communities. Further upstream comes downstream.



A wonderful example of transforming a useful and necessary dam into a useful dam as well as safe water-way, is the fully completed similar project of Charles City. As an example for us here in Ames, first we see the all important vision, as well as patience and resolve motivating people to see the project to completion. *Photo contributed by Charles City Recreation Department. <http://ccwhitewater.com/>*



The wing wall on the left will be cut down to allow more shoreline access. A wing wall is the portion of the dam that is on each side of the dam. Photo contributed by Ames Water and Pollution Control

WATER Continued from page 21

What are some of the obstacles facing this project? Will there be any on-going costs?

Christina Murphy: We're cutting down a wing wall that's in the park and basically opens up to the river. We are going to do a lot of shoreline accessibility and improvements.

A "wing wall" is the portion of the dam that is on each side of the dam.

Steve Lindaman is the park and recreation director who was overseeing the process in Charles City. Here is his voice and perspective.

How did your city conceive the idea of a beautiful water trail and park alongside the Cedar River?

Steve in Charles City: "For many years the issue on how can we capitalize on the asset Charles City has with the Cedar River flowing through downtown was discussed. With the floods of recent years, numerous residential properties along the river were acquired through flood mitigation. In 2001 a local hotel/motel tax was approved with 40 percent going to the Park and Rec Board to be used for capital improvements; which has averaged about \$40,000 annually. In addition to small projects, the Board wanted to focus on something larger that would be an impact on the community. In 2006, the Board decided to obtain input from an ISU landscape architecture site planning and design class on possible riverfront development ideas. This led to approximately 30 to 40

individual concepts. The Board focused on a few concepts and then hired AHTS (Architects from Waterloo, Iowa) to view the concepts and provide their vision for a riverfront development project. Since the low head dam was within the project boundary, and there had already been one drowning over the years, the architect Larry Kurtz proposed modification of the dam and create a single minor white-water/kayak area in addition to other improvements along the river."

How did Charles City get funding for the project?

Steve in Charles City: Board members acquainted themselves with whitewater activities and became more impressed with pursuing the concept. Two of Larry Kurtz acquaintances (white water enthusiasts) traveled to Charles City and agreed that the site offered excellent opportunity for the sport. This led to securing the services of Recreational Engineering & Planning from Boulder Co. who have designed 80 percent of whitewater courses in North America. Upon initial site visit, REP was very impressed with the potential to not only create one feature at the dam location but additional features as well. Plans and development options continued with excitement building on all fronts. About this time the State of Iowa created a "Great Place" project. The riverfront project, along with another tourism attraction project, was submitted for Charles City. Charles City was fortunate to be selected as a great place to visit; which also opened state funding. The Iowa DNR was also involved with significant funding for low-head dam removal. The Park and Rec Board had also been saving funds for the project. As the project was coming together and gaining support, local fundraising took place with banks, businesses, and private individuals contributing. The Parks and Rec

Board also took out a \$150,000 10-year loan for improvements with payments made from future hotel/motel tax funds.

What has been the overall reaction of the townspeople, as well as visitors?

Steve in Charles City: Overall, local support has been outstanding. Providing a more accessible riverfront that people can enjoy for walking, biking and overall spectating, greatly increased traffic.

Three Boy Scout eagle projects, one Girl Scout project and an Issac Walton League project have added to the riverfront. With fish ladders and habitat improvements, fishing has significantly improved on the river. Outside visitors are very pleased with the area and come numerous times to enjoy both active and passive opportunities. The total riverfront project includes the installation of whitewater/kayak course with 3 drops, boat launch, amphitheater, natural youth play area, storm water feature, labyrinth, 3 shelters, 9 hole disc golf course, fitness stations, walkways and handicapped access to the waters edge.



Photo by Jane Degeneffe

Such a marvelous report by city spokespeople involving good changes for our Skunk river! If we take encouragement from Charles City (and hopefully visit to

enjoy the free and accessible water play) we will all be benefited by this tremendous transformation of our beautiful waterways in Ames.

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Fall beauty update

What's new in beauty in Ames? Fall is the best time to check in with local salons for fall fashion tips and business updates.

Hair, skin and makeup services and trends are driven by the fashion world starting with new fabrics and colors two seasons each year. Designer choices are followed by the beauty industry to blend with the clothing.

The Pantone fashion color report for fall 2015 includes neutral colors like dried herb, desert sage, stormy weather and oak buff with bold colors like marsala, Biscay bay and reflecting pond, and pale hues like cadmium orange, cashmere rose and amethyst orchid. This color palette will work well with the shades our salon panel mention below including intense jewel tones and shade on shade colors.

Designers predict their must-haves for fall. Christian Siriano of Project Runway fame says you will need a bias-draped tropical printed dress using some of the fall color palette.



MARY CLARE
LOKKEN

Nicole Miller's must-have is stovepipe pants with a cashmere poncho.

Perry Ellis recommends a pair of wide-leg gaucho pants in gray felt.

Alice & Trixie encourage us to try a 60's style, long sleeved A-line shift dress in a retro print for just the right mix of mod and boho.

And now for some updates on local salons including a new one, a second one and a trendy one.

■ My Salon, owned by Megan Whitver, opened in September at 4611 Mortensen Road, Suite 109. An experienced stylist of 11 years,

Whitver is joined by four others to provide hair, waxing and nail services plus lash and hair extensions. A licensed tattoo artist from Heroic Ink will provide permanent eye makeup.

New for fall at My Salon is color melting, ombres moving into sombres, browns moving from dark to lighter browns, color pressing (a different form of balyage with color on color), while silvers and chomes are still popular.

■ Serenity Couture at North Grand Mall has added a new service for dry skin called beautifying body wrap, a scrub and moisturizing wrap combination. Peppermint pedicures offer a cooling tingling treatment along with their hot towel wrapped foot service.

Cassie Bexten, salon manager, added that dark bold reds and violet colors are hot this fall. Lips will be dark, eye-liners will be hunter green, navy blue and ruby red.

The Serenity staff from Ames will participate in the Polar Plunge in Des Moines to benefit Special Olympics by doing onsite blow out bar services along with their Des Moines market salons and school.

■ Finesse Spa Salon is on the grow adding a second location at 2520 Chamberlain in Cam-pustown. They will open in October, according to Meredith Miller, one of the partners.

A new massage therapist has joined Finesse at Somerset offering Swedish massage, deep tissue, sports, prenatal and infant massage, lymphatic drainage, aromatherapy, positional release, myofascial therapy and pulsing and rebalancing.

Enjoy the transition into fall as it happens. Beautiful colors, rich styles that make you want to cuddle up, and beauty services that go with all that prepare us for winter in a wonderful fashionable way.

5 last-minute money moves for 2015

BY BARBARA FRIEDBERG
GOBankingRates.com

With 2016 just around the corner, now is the time to get your finances in order, whether by cleaning things out or laying the groundwork for next year. Prioritize these five last-minute money moves to make your transition into 2016 easier and richer.

Use up your expiring work benefits

The flexible spending account is a wonderful tax saver. Every year, you estimate how much money you expect to spend on health care or child care expenses. This amount, up to the \$2,500 maximum, is then transferred into an FSA pre-tax and reduces your taxable income. Eligible expenses include out-of-pocket costs such as prescription drugs, doctor co-pays, and vision and dental costs. The savings come because you pay for these qualified expenses with the pre-tax monies.

The downside of the FSA is that if you don't use the money by the end of the year, you lose most of it. Fortunately, there are new rules that allow you to use most of the FSA contributions, according to the Society of Human Resource Management.

Give to charity and get a tax break

This is one of my favorites. Giving to charity helps others and benefits you. Giving to charity includes making cash contributions to eligible organizations as well

as donating gently used clothing and household items to charitable entities such as Goodwill and the Salvation Army.

If you itemize your taxes, you can claim both cash and non-cash contributions on Schedule A of the 1040 tax form. Claiming a charitable deduction is fully explained in the IRS.gov publications 526 and 561. Simply stated, you keep track of cash and non-cash charitable deductions, input the information on your Schedule A, and this amount is deducted from your taxable income, reducing the tax you pay.

I make it a habit to donate my old stuff to charity during the year. Every month or so, I go through the cabinets and closets and fill up a bag to donate. Be sure to hang on to the receipts to add up the deduction on your tax form.

Contribute to an IRA

The more money you can contribute to tax-advantaged accounts, the lower your tax bill and the more money you'll sock away for retirement. If you contribute to a traditional individual retirement account, you might qualify for a tax deduction if your workplace doesn't offer a 401(k). If you are covered by a retirement plan at work and your income is above a certain level, however, then you might not be able to contribute the full amount to an IRA.

The IRS.gov website gives the latest updates about IRA contribution and deduction limits. For 2015 returns, singles earning more than \$71,000 lose the tax break if they're covered at work. Married couples can earn up to \$191,000 and still take the IRA tax deduction as long as only one spouse is covered by a workplace plan. The tax break is eliminated for married

couples making more than \$116,000 if they are covered by a workplace plan.

Declutter your finances

Jim Wang, personal finance expert and publisher of *Wallet Hacks*, recommended decluttering your wallet or purse.

"Remove old receipts, old cards and other junk you've accumulated," he said. "Clutter can have a negative impact on your brain, and your wallet or purse is a small enough place to clean out quickly."

"While you're at it, see if you can limit the number of credit cards you carry to just one or two," he added. "Try to limit yourself to only carrying the essentials and then adding other items back as you notice them missing. I did this several years ago and have never looked back."

Simplifying your purse, wallet, accounts and credit cards can make your life more manageable. You'll feel less weighed down physically as well as less tempted to use credit.

Max out your 401(k)

Similar to increasing IRA contributions, the same strategy also works for your workplace retirement account. If you can contribute a few more dollars into a 401(k) or 403(b), you'll save on taxes this year and add to your retirement nest egg.

Even if you can't hit the maximum allowable contribution of \$18,000 for 2015, or \$24,000 for those over age 50, bumping up your annual amount will save you a few extra dollars by reducing the taxes you'll owe in April. Although these extra contributions might seem impossible, you'll be surprised at how your spending will adjust when there's less money available.

Raising the bar on BAR COOKIES

BY ARTHI SUBRAMANIAM | Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A tray of dessert bars featuring Cranberry Pear Bars, Apple Crumb Bars, Hazelnut Jam Bars, Chocolate-Coconut Bar, Chocolate-Butterscotch Crispy Bars and Jack's Favorite Blondies. Photo by Michael Henninger/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette/TNS

The sweet treat that is in the shape of a bar is omnipresent, omnificent and omnicompetent for a bunch of reasons.

It's a one-pan operation, easy to make, straight-forward and involves minimal prep time. And unlike cookies, they don't need to be portioned, scooped out onto a pan and then baked in batches. "Everything goes into the oven at once, and you are done," says food blogger ("The Next Door Baker") and cookbook author ("Real Sweet") Shauna Server.

It is easy to pack and don't require special or expensive containers. They also travel well.

"It requires no fussing when it comes to serving because the topping is thick and won't drip, and it is easily sliceable," says Julia Collin Davison, executive food editor of the PBS show "America's Test Kitchen." A bar can be handheld, and so does not require a fork or spoon. Nor does it require a plate — a single napkin will suffice — and they can be eaten on the run.

Cranberry pear bars

The sweet and tart tastes of fall are brought alive with the cranberries and pear nectar. Do not substitute old-fashioned oats for steel-cut oats or quick cooking oats.

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup packed brown sugar, plus another 2/3 cup, divided
3/4 cup cold butter
1 cup regular rolled oats
2/3 cup pear nectar
2/3 cup packed light brown sugar

2 cups fresh cranberries
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Line 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking pan with foil, leaving about 1 inch of foil extending over the ends of the pan. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, stir together flour and 1/2 cup

brown sugar. Cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in the oats.

Reserve 1 cup oats mixture. Press remaining mixture evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for about 15 minutes or until light brown.

Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan stir together pear nectar and 2/3 cup brown sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add cranberries. Let simmer, uncovered, for about 10 minutes or until slightly thickened.

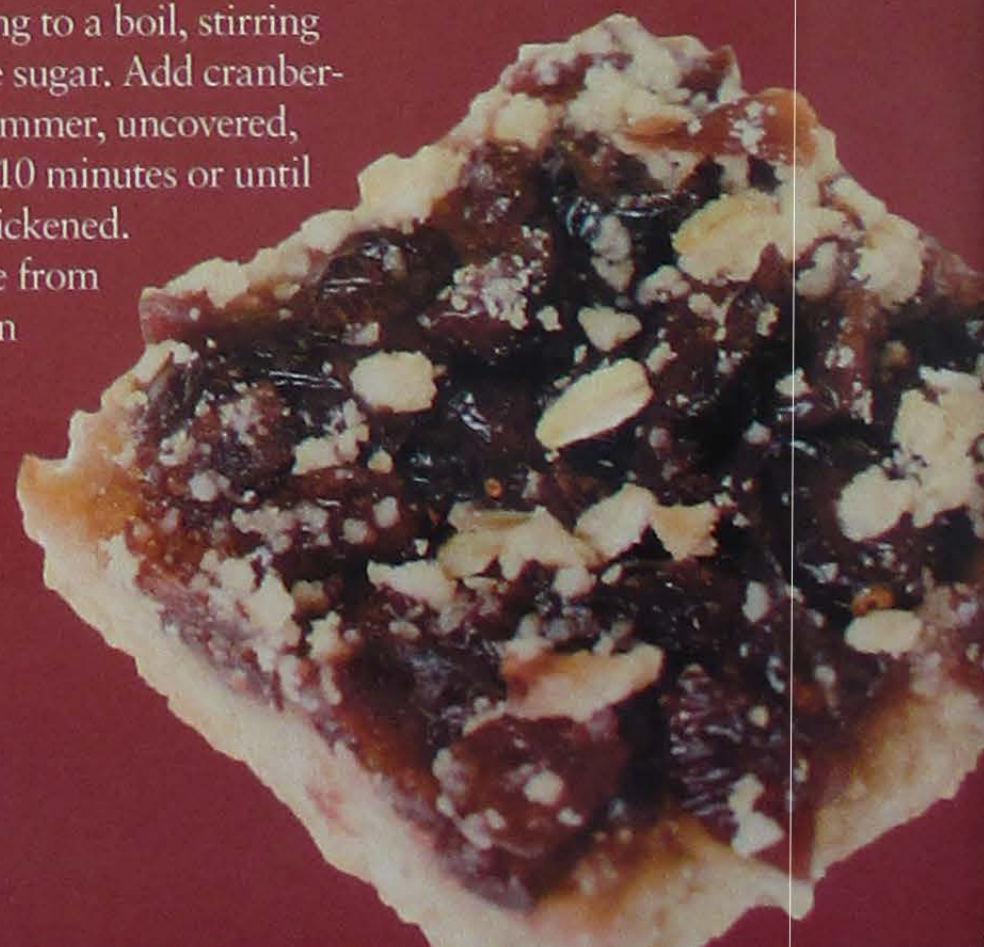
Remove from heat, stir in nutmeg.

Spread cranberry mixture evenly over

baked crust. Sprinkle reserved oat mixture over cranberry mixture. Bake for about 25 minutes more, or until the top is light brown.

Cool in pan on a wire rack. Use the overlapping foil to remove from pan and place on a cutting board. Cut into bars.

— "Baking Step by Step" by Better Homes and Gardens.



Chocolate-butterscotch crispy bars

Rice Krispies Treats get a peanutty twist here. The chewy, gooey bars are treated to a chocolate and butterscotch topping that make them ethereal.

1 cup honey
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/4 cups crunchy peanut butter
6 cups crisp rice cereal, such as Rice Krispies

1 12-ounce package semisweet chocolate morsels

1 12-ounce package butterscotch morsels
1/2 cup chopped honey-roasted peanuts

Spray a 13-by-9-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.

In a large saucepan,

stir together honey and sugar over medium-high heat. Bring just to a boil; remove from heat. Add peanut butter stirring well until combined. Add cereal, stirring until evenly coated. (Mixture will be thick.)

Press cereal mixture into prepared pan.

In a medium bowl, place chocolate and butterscotch. Microwave in 30-second intervals until they melt, stirring after each interval.

Spread chocolate mixture in an even layer over cereal mixture. Top with peanuts. Let cool until chocolate hardens; cut into squares.

— Taste of the South magazine, Fall Baking 2015 issue.

It's the best way to eat an apple pie that has been combined with an apple crumble without a spoon. But not any old apple would do; use Honey Crisp, Pink Lady or Jonagold here.

For crust and crumb topping:

2 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1 1/2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup unsalted butter, cold, cut into small cubes

For the filling:

4 medium apples, cored and chopped or sliced

1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar

2 tablespoons unsalted



Apple crumb bars

butter

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-by-13-by-2-inch baking pan.

Combine flour, oats, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt in a bowl. Add butter, and mix with a pastry blender until mixture is combined and crumbly. The mixture should hold together when pinched.

Reserve about a cup of the crust mixture for the topping. Press the remaining crust mixture firmly and evenly into the prepared pan. Bake for 20 minutes. Set aside.

To make filling, place

the apples, brown sugar, butter and cinnamon in a skillet and stir to combine. Cook over medium heat stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, or until the mixture is soft and bubbly.

Spread the filling evenly over the partially baked crust. Sprinkle the reserved crust mixture over the top of the filling.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until the edges and topping are golden brown. Allow to cool in the pan for 15 minutes before cutting into bars.

— "Quick-Shop-&-Prep 5 Ingredient Baking" by Jennifer McHenry (Page Street Publishing Co.; October 2015; \$19.99).

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Lemon-lime blondies

The soft blondies are filled with pucker power from the lemon and lime juices and zests.

1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
Zest of 1 medium lime
Zest of 1 medium lemon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
1 large egg
Juice of 1 medium lime
Juice of 1 medium lemon
1/2 cup almonds, sliced
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease an 8-by-8-inch baking pan.
Whisk together the flour, baking powder, lime zest, lemon zest and salt. Set aside.
Using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat butter and granulated sugar until light and fluffy. Add the egg and mix well. Mix in the lime juice and lemon juice.

Reduce the mixer speed to low, gradually add the flour mixture, mixing just until combined.

Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and spread evenly. Sprinkle almonds over the top of the batter.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a pick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Allow to cool in the pan for 15 minutes, before cutting into bars.

— Adapted from “Quick-Shop-&-Prep 5 Ingredient Baking” by Jennifer McHenry (Page Street Publishing Co.; October 2015; \$19.99).

Chocolate-coconut bars

3 cups finely ground cookies, such as graham crackers or chocolate wafers, or a combination
1/4 cup sugar
3/4 cup unsalted butter, melted
1 cup pecan pieces
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips or chunks
1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
1 1/2 cups sweetened, shredded coconut

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly splash a 15-by-10-inch rimmed baking sheet evenly with water; then line with parchment paper.

In a large baking bowl, stir together cookie crumbs, sugar and butter until combined.

Evenly press onto bottom and up sides of prepared baking sheet. Bake, rotating halfway through, until firm, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; cool about 20 minutes.

Sprinkle cooled crust evenly with pecans and chocolate. Pour condensed milk over the top, spreading to cover completely (do not let it drip over the edges). Sprinkle with coconut.

Bake until coconut is toasted, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer to rack; cool completely. Trim edges, if desired, and cut into equal-size bars.

— Everyday Food magazine, June 2005.

Jack's favorite blondies

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
2 1/4 cups firmly packed light brown sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
2 large eggs
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
1 cup toffee pieces
3/4 cup toasted pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Adjust the racks to the center of the oven. Line a 13-by-9-inch baking pan with foil, leaving a 2-inch overhang for easy removal after baking. Spray the foil lining with a nonstick baking spray.

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Once it's melted, stir in brown

sugar and cook, stirring until it is all combined. Remove from heat and allow mixture to cool for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl.

Stir eggs into cooled sugar and butter mixture one at a time, until they are well incorporated. Stir in vanilla; then add flour mixture, mixing to combine. With a rubber spatula, fold in toffee pieces and chopped pecans.

Spread batter in the prepared pan. Bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool for 30 minutes. Remove from the pan, and slice into 24 squares.

— “Jamie Deen's Good Food” by Jamie Deen.

Hazelnut jam bars

For the crust:
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup unsalted butter, cold, cut into small cubes
1/2 cup hazelnuts, chopped

For the filling:
3/4 cup preserves or jam
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-by-13-by-2-inch baking pan.

Combine flour, brown sugar and salt in a mixing bowl. Add butter, and mix with a pastry blender or fork until combined. The dough will be crumbly but

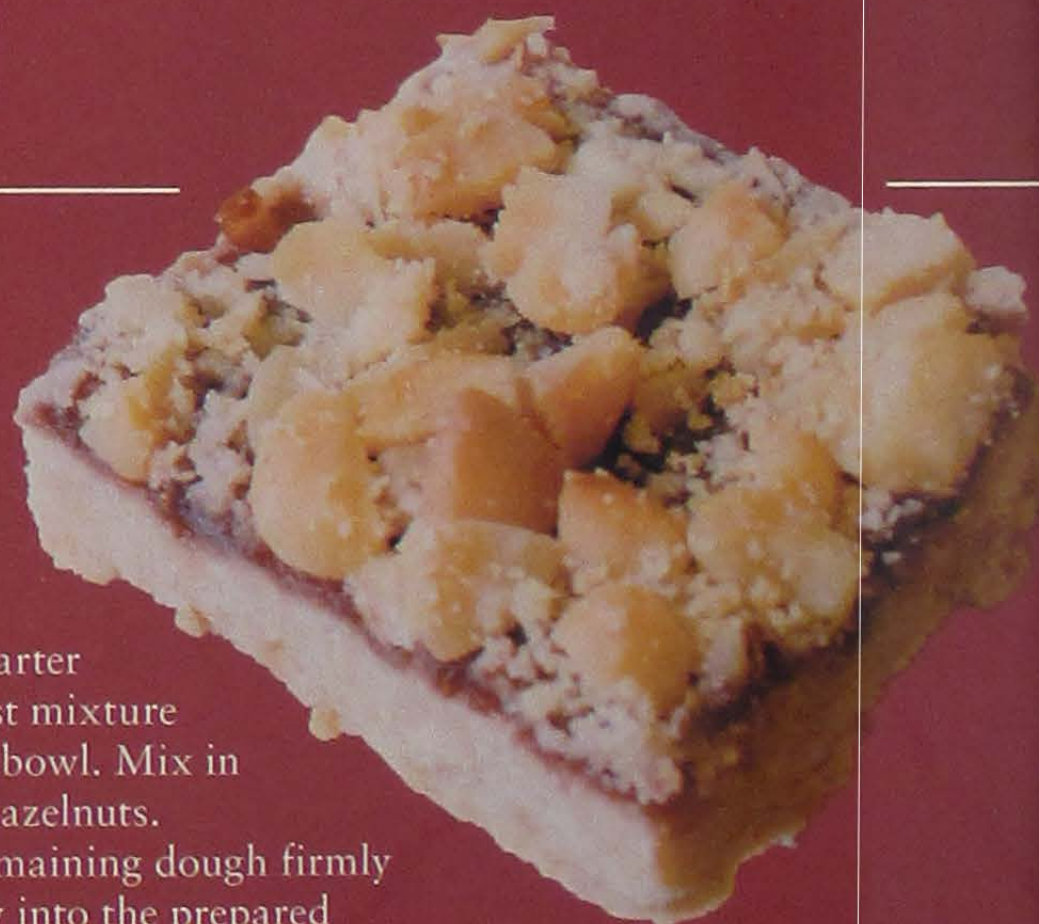
it should hold together when pinched.

Set aside a quarter of the crust mixture in a small bowl. Mix in chopped hazelnuts.

Press remaining dough firmly and evenly into the prepared pan.

Then gently spread the preserves over the crust. Sprinkle the reserved crust mixture on top of the preserves.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until bars are golden brown.



Allow to cool completely in the pan before cutting into bars.

— “Quick-Shop-&-Prep 5 Ingredient Baking” by Jennifer McHenry (Page Street Publishing Co.; October 2015; \$19.99).

Everything's coming up roses

BY KIM ODE | TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Rosy posy apple tarts

Makes 9.

Note: We liked the flavor and texture of Sweetango apples, but any good baking apple will work. Just make sure apples have the reddest skin possible. From Kim Ode.

Filling

6 ounces (3/4 of an 8-ounce package) cream cheese, room temperature
1/4 cup powdered sugar
2 tablespoons apple jelly
1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed according to package directions

Glaze

1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon milk
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Roses

3 cups water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 large apples (see note)
2 tablespoons apple jelly, melted in the microwave

Decorative sparkling sugar, if desired

Directions

With an electric mixer, whip together the cream cheese, powdered sugar and 2 tablespoons apple jelly until smooth and fluffy, about 1 minute. Set aside.

Unwrap the puff pastry on a well floured surface. It will be 9-by-9-inches square.

Using a ruler as a guide, roll the pastry into a 12-by-12-inch square. With a sharp knife or pizza cutter, straighten the edges, if necessary. Cut into nine 4-by-4-inch squares. Place on 2 baking sheets lined with parchment paper (or sprayed with baking spray).

In a small bowl, beat together the yolk, milk and cinnamon with a fork. Paint each pastry square with glaze, taking care to cover the entire surface, but keeping glaze from spilling over onto the baking sheet.

In the center of each square, place a generous tablespoon of cream cheese mixture. Place pans in refrigerator to chill.

In a medium bowl, combine 3 cups water and lemon juice.

Cut each apple in half. Remove the cores (a melon baller does a great job; otherwise, scoop carefully with a small spoon) along with stems and blossom ends. Placing the apple half cut-side down, and using your sharpest small knife, slice from top to bottom as thinly as possible. Submerge slices in lemon water.

Place racks in the bottom and middle positions and preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Arrange about 1/3 of the apple slices on a microwave-safe plate and microwave for 2 minutes. Crumple a paper towel to make nooks and crannies in which you can prop the apple roses. Or use a mini-muffin pan.

With another paper towel, dab softened

apples to absorb any excess juice. Begin forming a rose by rolling 1 apple slice into a tight spiral. Wrap another slice, always skin side up, around this bud, then repeat with 5 to 6 more slices. If the slices aren't pliable enough, return to the microwave for 30 more seconds.

Place rose on the crumpled paper towel to "set up" and repeat with the remaining apple slices — microwaving, dabbing, wrapping and propping — until you have 9 roses. There will be extra slices, which we'll use in a minute.

Take pastry squares out of the refrigerator and place a rose in the center of each dollop of filling, anchoring firmly. Press remaining slices into filling, curving around the rose to create more petals. You can make tiny rose-buds from smaller slices, placing them so they peek out from under the larger rose. (Consider any remaining apple slices a snack.)

With a pastry brush, carefully brush melted apple jelly over each rose so it glistens, then sprinkle with a pinch of decorative sparkling sugar, if desired.

Place pans in oven for 18 to 20 minutes, or until golden brown, switching pans on racks halfway through the baking time.

Cool on wire racks, and serve warm or at room temperature the same day. If desired, sprinkle with additional powdered sugar before serving.

Diabetes-friendly foods for the holidays

The holidays are a time to gather with friends and family and — let's be honest — enjoy all of your favorite holiday foods! But for someone with diabetes, the worry over calories and carbohydrates can cause a lot of unnecessary stress. Your Hy-Vee dietitians have tips to help you enjoy your holiday favorites while keeping blood sugar stable.

First of all, a plan of attack is crucial. Keep the MyPlate™ method in mind as you fill your plate. Start by filling half the plate with non-starchy vegetables without added creams, sauces and butter. If you're having a hard time finding enough vegetables to fill this half, think about adding fruits. Moving on to the rest of the plate, a quarter can be filled with starchy vegetables or grains—choose whole grains whenever possible. And finally, the last quarter of the plate should be filled with lean

protein. The American Association of Diabetes Educators have some great ideas to get you started:

- **Non-starchy vegetables:** carrots, green beans, broccoli, salad, Brussels sprouts and asparagus are great options; or add cranberries, baked apples and pears to your plate.

- **Grains and starchy vegetables:** sweet potatoes, mashed or baked potatoes, rice pilaf, or stuffing are great options.

- **Protein:** choose lean turkey slices (approximately 3 to 4 ounces), avoid dark meat, remove skin before eating, and consider a fruit-based relish instead of gravy to top your lean protein.

In addition to balancing your plate, there are other steps you can take, such as being more mindful throughout the rest of the day. Start with a nutritious breakfast and include other healthful snacks during the day, rather than saving all of

your carbs and calories for one large meal. Don't go into the meal starving or it is too easy to overeat. When it comes time to fill the plate, survey your options, pick out your favorites, then decide what will go on the plate and in what amounts. If you have the option, a smaller plate can also help you control your intake.

If you are the guest at the holiday feast, call the host to find out the menu, and consider offering to bring a side to share — the recipe below would be a tasty addition to the buffet. Walking or being active with your friends and family members after a large meal can also help to stabilize blood sugar levels. Even with the best of intentions, things don't always go according to plan, so try your best and remember that tomorrow is a new day.

Here is a delicious recipe to add to the menu, or bring to holiday gatherings.

Serves 12 (1/2 cup each)

Brussels sprouts with chestnuts and sage

ALL YOU NEED:

- 2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup coarsely chopped chestnuts (about 4 oz; see Tip)
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste

ALL YOU DO:

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add Brussels sprouts and cook until bright green and just tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain well.

Melt butter with oil and broth in a large skillet over medium heat. Add Brussels sprouts, chestnuts and sage and cook, stirring often, until heated through, 2 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Make Ahead Tip: Prepare through Step 1, cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours.

Tip: You don't need to prepare your own chestnuts for this dish. Cooked and peeled chestnuts are available in jars at this time of

year. Look for them in the baking aisle or near other seasonal food items.

Nutrition Facts per serving: 68 calories, 3g fat, 1g saturated fat, 3mg cholesterol, 117mg sodium, 10g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 2g protein.

Source: Eating Well, Inc.

This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

Nicole Arnold represents Hy-Vee as a nutrition expert working within the community to promote healthy eating and nutrition. Nicole is a Registered and Licensed Dietitian, ACE certified personal trainer and member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.



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